

**Prairie Drive Tennis Court - Construction and Operation  
of a Winter Air-Supported Structure by the Scarborough  
Bluffs Tennis Club  
(Ward 13 - Scarborough Bluffs)**

*(City Council on April 11, 12 and 13, 2000, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)*

**The Scarborough Community Council recommends the adoption of the following report (February 29, 2000) from the Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism:**

The Community Council reports having approved the foregoing recommendation by a unanimous vote of the Members of Community Council present and voting.

Purpose:

To investigate the possibility of covering the existing tennis courts at Prairie Drive Park with an air-supported structure. The project construction costs and operation expenses financed by the Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club as outlined in their proposal (Attachment 2).

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that City Council endorse the request of the Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club for the annual winter installation (October – April) of a air supported structure over the existing three tennis courts in Prairie Drive Park, subject to the following conditions:

- (a) all costs associated with the installation and operation be assumed by the Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club;
- (b) the project meets with the approval of the surrounding community;
- (c) the project meets all requirements of the Toronto Urban Development Services Department;
- (d) the Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club enters into a formal lease agreement with the city, satisfactory to the City Solicitor and Commissioner of Economic Development, Culture and Tourism;

- (e) all revenue generated through the sale of memberships shall be used to pay down the debt incurred by the club for the purchase of the air-supported structure and the annual operational costs of the winter tennis operation; once the debt is paid subsequent revenue is dedicated to further capital improvements such as court resurfacing, bubble replacement, clubhouse; and
- (f) effective with the 2000-2001 winter tennis season, membership fees generated through the existing agreement with the Scarborough Winter Tennis Club, known as the Racquet Sport Development Fund, be used to pay down the debt for the project at Prairie Drive Park as recommended by the Scarborough Tennis Federation.

Background:

In 1999, Centennial College closed its winter tennis facility at Warden Avenue and St. Clair Avenue resulting in the complete lack of winter indoor tennis facilities in the Southwest Scarborough community.

The Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club located in Southwest Scarborough began to explore ways to provide affordable winter tennis to tennis enthusiasts in their community.

After determining that there are currently no public funds available for this project, the Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club have made a commitment to self-finance the purchase and operation of a winter air supported tennis structure in Southwest Scarborough.

The Prairie Drive tennis courts (located on the East Side of Pharmacy Avenue, North of Danforth Avenue, opposite Teesdale Place) were selected in consultation with staff as the most suitable courts for a “bubble” structure in the area.

Comments:

This report recommends that Scarborough Community Council support the construction of a winter “bubble” over Prairie Drive tennis courts financed by the Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club. This is a cost-effective opportunity to meet public demand for indoor winter tennis and revitalize an existing facility in Southwest Scarborough with no interruption of existing service.

Public Demand:

The closure of the Centennial College indoor tennis facility in 1999 has left no opportunities for winter tennis in the Southwest Scarborough Community. Tennis enthusiasts must drive considerable distance to find affordable winter tennis facilities without waiting lists.

Within the Parks and Recreation South Region of the East District there are over 950-summer tennis club members without winter tennis facilities.

The Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club has a current list of over 120 tennis players ready to become members at a new facility for the 2000 winter season.

Revitalization of existing facility:

The Prairie Drive tennis courts are surrounded by Warden Woods Park to the north, Prairie Drive Park to the east, elevated TTC (open-air) tracks to the south and Pharmacy Avenue to the west. The Teesdale Place apartments are located on the west side of Pharmacy. The closest single family housing is located south of the rail tracks, south of the tennis courts. See the Prairie Drive Park site plan (Attachment 1).

The courts are supported by 36 parking spaces with a short driveway off Pharmacy Avenue.

The Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club has included the cost of upgrading the hydro supply and adding additional outer security lighting around the parking lot and tennis courts. (Attachment 2).

The structure would be erected for indoor use from October 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>. From May 1<sup>st</sup> to Sept. 31<sup>st</sup> the structure would be in storage and regular outdoor tennis would resume. The cost of erecting, dismantling and storing the structure is included in the operating costs. (Attachment 2).

Current public use of the courts would not be interrupted. For many years there has been no summer club utilizing the Prairie Drive courts. Public tennis lessons are provided for children through the Doug Philpott program in July and August. Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club currently supports the Doug Philpott program with financial contributions and tennis instructors. The Club would like to expand the opportunities for youth tennis at Prairie Drive as outlined in their report, (Attachment 2).

A public meeting will be held to consult with residents from Teesdale Place as well as those residents in single family homes to the south of the rail tracks.

Both city staff and volunteers from the Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club understand that a formal, Lease agreement articulating the roles, responsibilities and financial arrangements will need to be drafted and signed by the appropriate individuals.

Project Funding:

This initiative is supported by a committed, well-established community group. The Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club was established in 1951. It retains a strong membership and currently boasts 350 members, the largest in Scarborough. For 48 years the club has been fiscally responsible.

The Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club is proposing to finance the capital costs of the project (court resurfacing, purchase and construction of air supported structure) and the annual operating costs (heating, lighting, staffing, insurance). Costs are detailed in the proposal from Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club prepared by Meg Fletcher, President (Attachment 2).

The Club plans to borrow necessary funds from a financial institution. All revenue received through memberships and court fees would be used to pay down the debt. Upon retiring the debt, revenues from memberships and maintenance fees would be put into a reserve fund to deal with capital improvements in the future.

The Scarborough Tennis Federation endorses the Prairie Drive winter tennis project. Commencing with the 2001 winter season, new funds accrued in the development fund are earmarked for this project. A letter of endorsement from the Scarborough Tennis Federation President can be found in (Attachment 3).

Timeline:

The Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club proposes to have the Prairie Drive bubble structure operational by October 1, 2000.

Conclusions:

With Scarborough Community Council approval, and the approval of the community the Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club will finance the construction and operation of an air supported structure covering the Prairie Drive tennis courts at no cost to the City.

This would inject new life into the tennis courts at this site. The new facility would meet the public demand for winter tennis opportunities in Southwest Scarborough created by the closure of the Centennial College facility in 1999.

The Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club, Scarborough Tennis Federation, the Toronto Urban Development Services Department, North York Tennis Association, Parks and Recreation Technical Services and Urban Forestry were consulted during the preparation of this report.

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Ms. Meg Fletcher, President of the Scarborough Bluffs Tennis Club, appeared before the Community Council in connection with the foregoing matter.

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A copy of the Tennis Club's proposal referred to in the foregoing report was included in the Scarborough Community Council agenda for March 23, 2000, and a copy thereof is on file in the Office of the City Clerk, Scarborough Civic Centre.